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FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1739  
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RUEHBW/AMEMBASSY BELGRADE IMMEDIATE 0009  
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL IMMEDIATE 0060  
RUEHPS/AMEMBASSY PRISTINA IMMEDIATE 0100  
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA IMMEDIATE 0029

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRATISLAVA 000240

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2013  
TAGS: [EUN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [ZL](#) [IR](#) [IZ](#) [IS](#) [SY](#) [LE](#) [SO](#) [AF](#)  
GG, LO  
SUBJECT: GAERC MEETING: SLOVAKIA HOPES TO BECOME "LEADER ON  
AFGHANISTAN"

REF: A. SECSTATE 54639  
[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 237

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Lawrence Silverman for reasons 1  
.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Poloff delivered Ref A points to MFA European  
Correspondent Albin Otruba on May 22. In preparing for the  
upcoming GAERC, FM Kubis is, according to Otruba, putting the  
greatest effort into a speech on his recent trip to  
Afghanistan (Ref B). Otruba speculated that the Foreign  
Minister wants to be recognized as a leader on Afghanistan  
within the EU in order to strengthen his ability to promote a  
more robust Slovak policy, including military engagement,  
than PM Fico may now support.

[1](#)2. (C) On the Balkans, Otruba said Slovakia has not been as  
active in conversation within the EU in the run-up to May's  
GAERC as it had in the past when it lobbied for an early  
Stabilization and Association Agreement for Serbia and  
supported the French plan to extend visa-free travel to  
Serbian citizens. Otruba said that FM Kubis's comments on the  
Western Balkans will focus on the need to find an  
accommodation between UNMIK and EULEX. Otruba believes the  
GAERC will produce a strong statement in support of the  
pro-EU parties in Serbia.

[1](#)3. (C) Otruba said that Cuba will not be discussed at this  
GAERC. He described Slovakia's position on Cuba, however, as  
being "critical," but not as "radical" as that of the Czech  
Republic. Otruba described Cuban political prisoners as "a  
real problem," but said Slovakia believes dialogue with Cuba  
can be helpful.

[1](#)4. (C) Otruba asked about the status of the U.S. Embassy in  
Belarus and if the U.S. sees any hope for a thaw in  
relations. Otruba said he has many good friends in the Slovak  
NGO community who work with Belarus, and that he has heard  
first-hand that the situation is becoming worse. He  
predicted, however, that the West is not powerful enough to  
force change in Belarus without Russian acquiescence, adding  
that the current situation in Georgia would likely lead the  
Russians to stand in the way of any rapprochement between  
Belarus and the west.  
OBSITNIK